

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3098

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6561

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV ETRD UR

SUBJ: CHANGES IN MANAGEMENT OF SOVIET FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS

REF: MOSCOW 3402

1. SUMMARY. APARTFROM STRUCUTRAL MODIFICATIONS IN MANAGEMENT OF USSR'S FOREIGN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES WHICH MAY BE IMPENDING (REFTTEL), RETIREMENTS AND PROMOTIONS WITHIN SOVIET FOREIGN TRADE MINISTRY NOW APPEAR IMMINENT. FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER MIKHAIL KUZ'MIN, REPORTED TO HAVE BECOME COMPLETELYDEAF RECENTLY, IS EXPECTED TO RETIRE IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE, FOLLOWED AFTER BRIEF INTER-VALBY THE OTHER FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER, IVAN SEMICHASTNOV. PRIME CANDIDATE FOR KUZ'MIN'S POSITION IS DEPUTY FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER VLADIMIR ALKHIMOV, WHILE RUMORS IN MOSCOW FOREIGN BUSINESS CIRCLES NAME MOST JUNIOR OF DEPUTY FOREIGN TRADE MINISTERS VLADIMIR SUSHKOV TOGETHER WITH DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF STATE COMMITTEE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DZHERMAN GVISHIANI AMONG FRONT RUNNERS FOR SEMICHASTNOV'S POSITION. END SUMMARY.

2. RECENT INDICATIONS OF SHAKE-UP IN FOREIGN TRADE MINISTRY BEGAN WHEN ALKHIMOV AND GVISHIANI BACKED OUT OF COMMITMENTS TO TAKE PART IN STANFORD RESEARCH INSTITUTE'S PLANNED APRILSEMINAR
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IN SAN FRANCISCO. ALKHIMOV'S SUBSEQUENT UNAVAILABILITY FOR PRO-

POSED APRIL US-SOVIET MARINE CARGO INSURANCE MEETING IN LONDON, COUPLED WITH PERSISTENT RUMORS OF RETIREMENTS AND NEW APPOINTMENTS WITHIN MFT, HAVE SUGGESTED THAT CHANGES WOULD TAKE PLACE SHORTLY.

3. FORMER COMMERCE SECRETARY STANS, PRESENTLY IN MOSCOW ON PRIVATE VISIT, TOLD ME APRIL 27 THAT HE HAD ASKED ALKHIMOV ABOUT PERSONNEL CHANGES IN MFT IN COURSE OF WEEKEND VISIT TO YAROSLAVL' AND ROSTOV (ALKHIMOV ACTED AS HIS ESCORT). ALKHIMOV REPORTEDLY TOLD STANS ABOUT KUZ'MIN'S INFIRMITY AND CONFIRMED THAT KUZ'MIN WOULD BE RETIRING SOON. WHILE HE DECLINED TO STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT HE WOULD TAKE KUZ'MIN'S PLACE, ALKHIMOV IMPLIED THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN. ACCORDING TO ALKHIMOV, KUZ'MIN WILL BE FOLLOWED INTO RETIREMENT IN NEAR FUTURE BY SEMICHAISTNOV, THEREBY OPENING MFT'S REMAINING FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER POSITION TO NEW APPOINTMENT.

4. STANS MET WITH PATOLICHEV FOR ABOUT FORTY-FIVE MINUTES ON APRIL 23, AND COMMENTED THAT MINISTER LOOKS HALE AND HEARTY. IN COUSE OF CONVERSATION PATOLICHEV GAVE NO INDICATION THAT HE MAY BE THINKING OF QUITTING HIS JOB. ON THE CONTRARY, PATOLICHEV COMMENTED THAT HE IS REGULARLY PUTTING IN TEN-HOUR DAYS AT MINISTRY.
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